

**ETHICS AND STANDARDS COMMITTEE
COUNCIL CHAMBER, CIVIC CENTRE, STOURPORT ON SEVERN
TUESDAY, 1st FEBRUARY 2005**

PRESENT:

Independent Members: Reverend M Warren (Chairman), and Mr C J Brighton

Councillors: Mrs I M Dolan, P Dyke, Mrs S M Hayward, Miss S C Meekings, J A Shaw and J C Simmonds

Parish Representative: Councillor R Hobson

CM.691 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Mrs A McDowell (Independent Member), Councillor C D Nicholls and T Whatmore (Parish Councillor).

CM.692 APPOINTMENT OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS

Councillor J A Shaw was appointed as a substitute for Councillor C D Nicholls

CM.693 DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

No declarations of interest were made.

CM.694 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on the 2nd November 2004 were confirmed as a correct record and were signed by the Chairman.

CM.695 CODE OF CONDUCT UPDATE

The Head of Legal and Democratic Services told Members that she had been submitting updates on the Code of Conduct to the Council's Information Bulletin.

A consultation on the Code of Conduct would shortly be taking place, as it was perceived that parts of the Code were hard to follow. The consultation document, when available, would be formally considered by the Ethics and Standards Committee.

Members attention was drawn to a recent case referred to the Standards Board. The case was known as the 'Dawkins Case.' This was a case that was referred to the local level for determination. The Council concerned made a decision on the case, but the decision was appealed against and it went for judicial review on the basis that the Council had not come to its decision within the set 3-month timescale.

The Head of Legal and Democratic Services emphasised the importance of completing processes within the required timescale. She stated that if a referral were to be made by the Standards Board to this Council it was not likely to cause a problem as procedures were already in place to deal with such referrals.

Members noted that just over 100 cases had been passed to the local level for determination. This Council had yet to have a case referred.

The Head of Legal and Democratic Services commented that as soon as the consultation documents on the Code of Conduct were received, they would be circulated to all members for comment. Any comments from members who were not members of the Ethics and Standards Committee could be channelled through to members of the Committee.

CM.696 EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

DECISION : Under Section 100A (4) of the Local Government Act 1972 the press and public be excluded from the meeting during the consideration of the following items of business on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of 'exempt information' as defined in paragraph 4 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Act.

CM.697 SUMMARY OF MINUTES

The following proceedings were considered after the press and public had been excluded from the meeting. A summary of the minutes relating to these items have been made as “exempt information” would be disclosed if the minutes were published in full.

Complaints to the Local Government Ombudsman 2003/2004

The Committee noted a report that detailed the outcome of complaints to the Local Government Ombudsman in accordance with Council policy.

The meeting concluded at 6.12 pm.,

J:Committee/Ethics and Standards/minutes/openmins01.02.05.doc